

## Increasing Access to Justice for the Hispanic Community

# Forms, Web Site Now in Spanish

The Domestic Relations forms used by self-represented litigants are now available in a bilingual format for Spanish speakers.

### Forms

Forms are available online in fillable PDF (Adobe Portable Data Format), the same format used for the English-language forms. Spanish text appears beside or below the English. Online the translated text appears in red to make it easier to distinguish. Spanish speakers can fill in the fields in the translated portion of the form and it will automatically populate the English portion of the form. Longer text portions of the form must still be completed in English so that it can be read by court personnel.



Forms available in Spanish include those necessary for divorce, child custody, visitation, child support, protection from domestic violence, and name changes. Complete instructions for each form are available in Spanish. A simple interface in Spanish assists users in identifying which forms and instructions they need for each case type.

### Web site

The Department of Family Administration web pages have also been translated into Spanish to help Spanish speakers navigate the family justice system. Forms and web pages are found at [www.courts.state.md.us/family](http://www.courts.state.md.us/family). Click on “Español” to access the Spanish pages. Click on “Formularios” from the Spanish web site to access the forms.

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## Self-Help programs are only part of the picture

# Pro Se Assessments Note Gains, Urge More

A recently completed nationwide study of self-help programs reveals that self-help clinics, such as Maryland’s “pro se assistance projects,” are an important first-step in addressing the needs of the self-represented—although more is still needed. Maryland was the lead state in the study, funded in part by the State Justice Institute, to test an evaluation protocol for programs designed to assist the self-represented. Also included in the study were self-help programs at courts in Florida, Minnesota, Arizona, and Alaska.

Five Maryland courts collected data and hosted visits from consultant John Greacen, former state court administrator for New Mexico, and volunteer evaluators from state courts in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Florida, and California. The circuit courts for Baltimore City and Harford, Montgomery, Prince George’s, and Worcester counties all participated in the project.

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# Walking in Another's Shoes



Pamela Cardullo Ortiz, Executive Director, Family Administration

This past August, family support services coordinators participated in an exercise that gave them the opportunity to consider the experience people have with the family justice system. One group was asked to imagine the experience of the members of a non-traditional family; another group was asked to walk through the legal system with the eyes of a non-English speaking litigant. Others were asked to experience and rate the court system from the eyes of still other stakeholders. Participants looked at how well we performed from those various perspectives in the areas of access to justice, expedition, timeliness, and the other prongs of the Trial Court Performance Standards and the Performance Standards and Measures for Family Divisions.

While only an exercise, it was an important reminder that the experience “outsiders” have with the family justice system can be very different from the experience we have as seasoned “insiders.”

If it seems difficult to envision what their experience might be like, we can all think of experiences we have as “outsiders.” I recently had back-to-back dental nightmares—one with my 5-year-old son, and one myself that caused me to second guess my dentist. As a non-dentist, how do I really know this “expert” is doing the job right? He is pleasant enough, but does that make him good? I felt extremely disadvantaged as I tried to weigh his advice and evaluate his work.

If you have traveled, you may also know what it feels like to try to navigate your way through a

country where the primary language is not your own. When my father-in-law was alive, my husband and I would regularly visit him on the island of Vieques in Puerto Rico. While he spoke English, the friends with whom he spent most of his time did not. They were extremely kind to me as I made feeble attempts to participate in the conversation in Spanish, and even make jokes. On the whole, however, I felt largely misunderstood and was sure that they had not been able to get to know me and the many rich aspects of my oh-so-dynamic personality. To them I was just my husband’s wife. They evaluated me by evaluating his happiness, which they largely estimated by judging his girth and whether or not he was eating well.

The report released earlier this year by the Judiciary’s Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness highlights the importance of responding to the perceptions and experiences of the many diverse individuals who come before the court. To that end, in this issue, we are happy to announce the release of bilingual Spanish forms and Spanish-language web pages which we hope will enhance access to the family justice system for Hispanics. While they represent only one portal through which users experience the legal system, we hope that this will be the beginning of a larger effort to improve the experience of those who are often on the outside looking in.

## family matters

We welcome your comments and contributions.

Please call or write: Pamela Cardullo Ortiz, Exec. Director

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Judicial Conference on CINA/  
Delinquency Features Mental  
Health, Substance Abuse

## Improving Our Response to the Needs of Kids is a C.A.N.D.O.

Juvenile judges and masters heard from local and national experts on mental health and substance abuse issues at the Seventh Annual Child Abuse, Neglect, and Delinquency Options (C.A.N.D.O.) Judicial Conference. The conference, sponsored by the Department of Family Administration/Foster Care Court Improvement Project, was hosted in St. Michaels from Oct. 4 through 6.

The conference opened with a keynote address by Dr. Wilson Compton of the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Compton offered an informative presentation on dual diagnosis or co-occurring disorders and treatment issues. This topic was of particular interest to juvenile judges and masters who hear cases in which parents are suffering from both mental illness and substance abuse.

Dr. Diane Marsh of the University of Pittsburgh, gave a presentation on the "Impact of Mental Illness on Children." She offered a thought-provoking presentation on how the parenting role is affected when parents are mentally ill and the vulnerability children face in these circumstances. She also discussed prevention and reunification in foster care cases, as well as the resiliency of adult children of mentally ill parents.

The second day of the conference focused on substance abuse, with an informative and entertaining presentation on "Addiction and Relapse" by Kenneth Osborne of the Therapeutic Justice Institute. The day continued with presentations on Family Dependency Treatment Courts, the competing Clocks of ASFA, and a presentation of the recently completed Child and Family Service Review (CFSR).

Janiece Siegerist of the National Assessment and Development Services led the group in an engaging, entertaining, and educational session on "Building a Strong Team: Collaboration and Trust." This session allowed judges and masters to better understand themselves as well as the other members of their team and to develop more creative, effective ways of communicating.

As the third day of the conference explored delinquency issues, Dr. Kurt Bumby of the Center for Sex Offender Management provided an in-depth presentation on juvenile sex offenders and treatment. His participation was made possible through a technical assistance grant from the Center for Sex Offender Management. The afternoon sessions included sessions on "Explaining Diagnosis," "Accessing Services," "Nuts and Bolts of Delinquency," and "Competency Issues." The day closed with remarks from Nancy Forster, Office of the Public Defender, Secretary Kenneth Montague, Department of Juvenile Services, and Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert M. Bell.

Chief Judge Bell thanked all of the participants, speakers, and staff for the continuous hard work they provide to Maryland's children, and reminded them that we C.A.N.D.O. what it takes to make a difference in the lives of Maryland's youth.



## Enhancing Advocacy

# CINA/TPR Attorneys Engaged during Annual Child Abuse and Neglect Conference

Nearly 200 attorneys attended the Second Annual Child Abuse and Neglect Attorney Conference, "CINA: Counsel In Need of Assistance." A mix of agency counsel, children's counsel, parents' counsel, and the permanency planning liaisons attended the Oct. 5 conference, which was hosted by the Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP) in Columbia at the Sheraton Columbia Hotel and Conference Center.

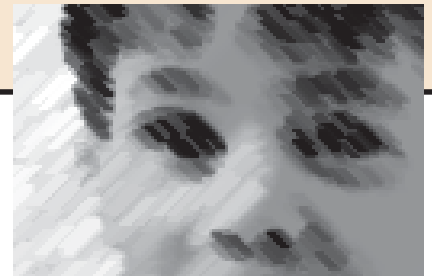
During the conference, attendees were apprized of new developments in Maryland's CINA and Termination of Parental Rights in the "Case Law Update" session, which was jointly presented by their colleagues Susan Gilhooly, Esq., of the Office of the Public Defender, C.J. Messerschmidt, Esq., of the Office of the Attorney General, and Joan Little, Esq., of the Legal Aid Bureau. Court of Special Appeals Chief Judge Joseph Murphy enlightened attendees with an engaging practical session on "Evidence in CINA/TPR Cases."

During a session on the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), attorneys had the opportunity to take part in an interactive

responsive session presented by Jennifer Renne, Esq., from the American Bar Association's Center for Children and the Law.

Conference attendees were also able to choose from myriad topics ranging from immigration issues to mental health issues for parents and children in CINA cases. Dr. Donald Vereen from the National Institute of Health captivated participants with his overview of dual diagnosis and brain activity during the session on mental health issues. Presentations from Jennifer Renne, on "Diminished Capacity/Considered Judgment of Both Parents and Children," "Immigration Issues" by Just Neighbors Immigrant Ministry's Larry Katzman, Esq., and Christina Wilkes, Esq., and the session on administrative proceedings by Sandra Barnes, Esq., Office of the Attorney, were also well received by conference attendees.

Congratulations to the members of the Foster Care Court Improvement Project's Representation Subcommittee for a job well done.



## Spanish website, cont. from p. 1

### Telephone Help for Spanish Speakers

To help users further, the Department of Family Administration has engaged the Women's Law Center to expand its Legal Forms Helpline by offering help with the forms in Spanish. Helpline services are available in Spanish on Mondays from 9 am to 12:30 pm. Users can dial 1-877-293-2507 or 443-519-4054 to receive free help with the forms from a Spanish-speaking attorney.

### Orientation for Organizations Serving the Hispanic Community

Recognizing that many Spanish speakers may not have access to the Internet, the judiciary hopes to expand access to the service by providing information to organizations serving the Hispanic community. The Department of Family Administration will be offering an orientation session on the new Spanish-language resources to representatives from Hispanic organizations at a later date. For information or to register, contact the Department of Family Administration at 410/260-1580.

# mark your calendar

January 11-12, 2005	Parenting Coordination: Helping High Conflict Parents Resolve Disputes. AFCC. Joan B. Kelly, Ph.D. 08/664-3750	University of Baltimore 608/664-3750
January 21, 2005	FCCIP Multi-Disciplinary Training Meeting Baltimore County (includes Baltimore, Carroll, and Harford counties)	Lynette Smothers 410/260-1427
January 28, 2005	FCCIP Multi-Disciplinary Training Meeting Montgomery County (includes Montgomery, Howard, and Frederick counties)	Lynette Smothers 410/260-1427
February 18, 2005	Coordinators Meeting	Pamela Ortiz, 410/260-1580
April 25, 2005	Governor's 12th Annual Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect	410/767-4160
May 13, 2005	Coordinators Meeting	Pamela Ortiz, 410/260-1580
June 13-17, 2005	40-Hour Basic Mediation Course	Jennifer Keiser, 410/260-1580
July 25-27, 2005	20-Hour Child Access Mediation Course	Jennifer Keiser, 410/260-1580

## New Program Addresses Domestic Violence

# POARP Program Expands to Carroll County

The Department of Family Administration, in conjunction with the Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc., and the House of Ruth, is pleased to announce the establishment of a new Protective Order Advocacy and Representation Project (POARP) in Carroll County, located in the Circuit Court at 55 N. Court Street in Westminster. The new program was made possible, in part, by a Violence Against Women Act STOP grant awarded through the Governor's Office on Crime Control and Prevention.

Over the years, the Judiciary has been dedicated to enhancing the reach of programs that address the legal needs of litigants in domestic violence cases. The Judiciary has been successful in replicating the POARP model throughout Maryland through partnerships with various non-profit organizations.

These organizations provide victims of domestic violence with a single site where they can receive advice, referrals, safety planning, and legal representation. The purpose of these programs is the prevention and reduction of family violence. In

many instances, the courts provide space within the courthouse, offering on-site legal services. Immediately after receiving assistance, victims can petition the court for protection from domestic violence without having to leave the building.

Protective Order Advocacy and Representation Projects (POARP) are also located in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service provides domestic violence advocacy through their SafeNet program which serves Kent, Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester, and Queen Anne's counties and through a domestic violence legal services program in Washington County.

The Life Crisis Center provides services to Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset counties, while the Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy provides legal assistance to Charles, St. Mary's and Calvert counties. The YWCA in Arnold provides domestic violence legal services in the Anne Arundel County District Court and Circuit Court.

# Pro Se Assessments, *cont. from p. 1*

## Solid Programs

“The Maryland judicial branch should take great pride in the progress it has made in implementing programs to assist self-represented litigants in its circuit courts,” Graecen wrote in a report summarizing assessments conducted of five Maryland self-help programs. The five programs studied each operate “vital and effective programs” that are:

- very highly rated and valued by the litigants who use them;
- have qualified and experienced staff; and
- are improving the performance of self-represented litigants and easing the burden of these cases on judges, masters, lawyers, and court staff.

Litigants in all states were much happier with the programs than other stakeholders were. Judges and attorneys tended to express less satisfaction with the programs than court staff did and there was significant variation from court to court in how much judges and lawyers valued the program. Evaluators generally felt, however, that lower level of satisfaction reflected less on how well the program was operating, and was more indicative of stakeholder attitudes towards self-represented litigants and whether the program had conducted significant outreach to the bench, the bar, and the community.

## Going Farther

“[T]he assessment process has made clear that the issue facing Maryland . . . is not how well its programs to assist self-represented litigants are working, but rather how well the court as a whole is treating these litigants and how well they are able to obtain the legal relief to which they are entitled under the law and the facts of their situations,” the report says. The individual program assessments and the summary report make numerous suggestions for how Maryland can accomplish that larger goal.

Key among those was the recommendation that Maryland develop a spectrum of programs to assist self-represented litigants ranging from telephone-based programs, such as the Women’s Law Center Legal Forms Helpline funded by the Administrative

Office of the Courts, to full-fledged programs proffering legal advice. Graecen recommends that court employee-staffed programs restrict their service to legal assistance only to avoid ethical problems, but suggests that programs operated for the court by contractual vendors should be allowed to provide legal advice. The report notes that passage of ABA Model Rule 6.5, which would eliminate the need for conflicts checks by programs that provide only advice and brief services, would enhance the ability of contractors to provide legal advice.

Additional recommendations for Maryland were:

- to create statewide definitions of legal information and legal advice to provide clarity for program and court staff;
- to train judges how to deal with self-represented litigants in the courtroom;
- to adopt a more sophisticated judicial branch forms process, including adding specific admonitions for litigants regarding specific legal rights that may be implicated, and improving forms and instructions for readability and effectiveness;
- to translate instructions into other languages;
- to develop forms for use in other areas;
- to enhance self-help programs and forms with workshops on specific case types; and
- to put into effect rules to allow limited scope representation to encourage attorneys to provide limited legal services to litigants.

The results of the nationwide study establish a benchmark for programs designed to assist the self-represented. They also provide guidance on the usefulness of the evaluation tool for other courts and programs.

The assessment reports for the five participating Maryland court programs, and the summary report for Maryland are available from the Department of Family Administration Web site under “Publications” at [www.courts.state.md.us/family](http://www.courts.state.md.us/family).

# District Court Judicial Conference Features DV Issues



Judge Angela Eaves at the District Court Judicial Conference presentation on domestic violence.

When Maryland's District Court judges convened for a one-day educational conference Oct. 1 at the Robert F. Sweeney Courthouse in Annapolis, domestic violence was one of the topics they considered. The conference included an update on new case law, domestic violence and peace order cases, bankruptcy, and treatment of defendants with drug or alcohol dependency.

Harford County District Court Judge Angela Eaves planned and coordinated a well-attended session on domestic violence and peace order cases titled "Ten Ways to Ease the Pain." Judge Eaves is the chair of the Domestic Violence Subcommittee for the Judicial Conference Committee on Family Law.

The course identified and addressed 10 hot topics including abuser intervention programs, sufficiency of evidence, emergency family maintenance, transferring cases, firearms surrender, findings of fact for imminent serious bodily harm, mutual orders of protection, temporary protective and peace order hearings, orders entered by default, and a digest of cases.

Judge Eaves' co-presenters included Carol Doctrow, research associate and Twilah Shirley, Esq., director; both of the Family Violence Council at the Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families; Connie Kratovil Lavelle, Esq., of the Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence; Dorothy Lennig, Esq., clinic director of the House of Ruth; and Alexandra Miller, Esq., of the Department of Family Administration. Judge Eaves is involved in planning a half-day Judicial Institute course on domestic violence scheduled for Oct. 28, 2005.



Participants listen to the presentation on domestic violence.

photos by Alexandra Miller

# Recent Family Law Decisions

*Family Matters* highlights recent reported decisions of the Maryland Court of Appeals and Court of Special Appeals that address family law issues. Copies of reported opinions are available online at <http://www.courts.state.md.us/opinions.html>.

## COURT OF APPEALS

### ■ Child Abuse and Neglect

*Horridge, et al. v. St. Mary's County Dept. of Social Services, et al.*, No. 80, September Term, 2003, filed July 28, 2004. Opinion by Wilner, J. Cathell and Battaglia, JJ., Dissent.

The local department of social services (DSS) has a legislatively created duty flowing to children specifically identified to DSS as the subject of suspected abuse, and as such the public duty doctrine is not available as a defense in a tort action. The public duty doctrine, which holds that when a statute or common law imposes on a public entity a duty to the public at large, and not a duty to a particular class of individuals, the duty is not one enforceable in tort. In distinguishing this case, the court noted the law and regulations in this area create a mandatory duty to act and the steps to be taken are specifically delineated. More importantly, the statute makes it clear that the sole and specific objective of the law is to protect a specific class of children—those identified to DSS as possible victims of abuse and neglect. In this case, the appellant father made eight reports to DSS of suspected abuse and provided information to social workers of a prior abuse case involving the mother in Texas; a neighbor also reported suspected abuse. DSS made one visit to the home but declined to remove the child. The child was later beaten to death by the child's mother and/or her boyfriend.

DSS has a “special relationship” with children identified in, or upon reasonable effort, identifiable from, facially reliable reports of abuse or neglect, and subject to the State Tort Claims Act, to make them liable if harm occurs because they fail in their mandated

**duty.** The foreseeability of harm from agency inaction, once a facially reliable report of abuse is made, may serve to establish as well the “close connection” between the negligent conduct and the injury ultimately suffered.

Where the actionable duty is to protect another from harm, proximate cause must be judged in terms of the foreseeability of such harm being inflicted. Citing the Restatement (Second) of Torts, §442A, the Court of Appeals noted, “[w]here the negligent conduct of the actor creates or increases the foreseeable risk of harm through the intervention of another force, and is a substantial factor in causing the harm, such intervention is not a superseding cause.” The complaint alleged sufficient facts to make a prima facie case that the negligence of DSS and its social workers was a proximate cause of the injury ultimately inflicted on the child, even though the actions of the mother and/or her boyfriend could be seen as an intervening act. Judgment reversed and remanded.

*Dissent:* In his dissent, J. Cathell joined by J. Battaglia, notes that this case will create a significant increase in litigation. Fearing liability, DSS may remove children unnecessarily to protect itself from liability. “[W]ith the majority’s decision, virtually every discretionary act of every employee of any administrative agency, whose employees by statute are required to perform discretionary functions, will now subject the state to civil suits where none existed before.” The dissent takes issue with the cases distinguished by the majority in reaching its conclusion; the dissent feels those cases are not inapposite and should be controlling.

*Charles Co. Dept. of Social Services v. Vann*, No. 87, September Term, 2003, filed July 29, 2004. Opinion by Raker, J.

An administrative law judge (ALJ) did not err in holding that a parent was responsible for indicated child abuse when, in the course of administering corporal punishment, the parent inadvertently injured his son because the child attempted to escape the punishment. The issue before the ALJ was a mixed issue of law and fact, or an application

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of the law to the facts and, as such, the proper standard of review was the substantial evidence test. Here the ALJ had substantial evidence to reasonably conclude that the respondent's actions created a substantial risk of harm toward his son. Judgment of the Court of Special Appeals reversed.

In further discussion, the Court of Appeals rejected the local department of social service's argument that the Family Law Article creates two separate definitions of "child abuse" in §4-501(b)(2)—used for protective orders—and in §5-701(b)(1)—used by local departments of social services in investigating allegations of abuse. The department argued that, because §4-501(b)(2) specifically mentions reasonable corporal punishment, that definition of abuse excludes corporal punishment, whereas some forms of corporal punishment may be included within the definition of child abuse in §5-701(b)(1). On the contrary, the court held that **there is only one definition of abuse in the Family Law Article (i.e., that found in §5-701(b)(1)). Reasonable corporal punishment, by definition, is not child abuse. Therefore there can be no definition of child abuse that includes reasonable corporal punishment.**

## ■ Child Support

*Gladis v. Gladisova*, No. 127, September Term 2003, filed August 24, 2004. Opinion by Battaglia, J. Raker and Harrell, JJ., dissent.

**A trial court may not deviate from the Child Support Guidelines to account for the lower cost of raising a child in an area outside of the United States where the cost of living is appreciably less than in Maryland.** The parties married and had a child in the Slovak Republic. The father later left for the U.S. and resides in Maryland. He obtained a Maryland divorce from his wife in 1998 which charged him with providing financial support for his daughter but did not specify an amount. The mother later filed in Maryland seeking establishment of child support under the Maryland Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (MUIFSA). MUIFSA applies according to the majority because it defines "State"

to include a foreign jurisdiction that established a law and procedures to issue and enforce support orders substantially similar to MUIFSA. The Slovak Republic has such a law. Here no deviation was permitted. A child's "needs" depend on the parents' economic position and here the child is entitled to the advantages of her father's economic strength.

*Dissent:* In her dissent, J. Raker, joined by J. Harrell, argues that the legislature did not intend the guidelines to apply when the custodial parent resides outside of the United States.

## ■ CINA

*In re: Ariel G.*, No. 9, September Term, 2004, filed Oct. 5, 2004. Opinion by Harrell, J.

**The trial court erred in holding a mother of a child found CINA (Child in Need of Assistance) in civil contempt for refusing to disclose her knowledge of the whereabouts of her child where the mother had pending criminal charges in a matter related to her child's disappearance and where she was entitled to invoke her privilege against self-incrimination.** Judgment of the Court of Special Appeals affirmed.

## ■ Custody / Criminal

*Khalifa v. State*, No. 133, September Term 2003, filed Aug. 3, 2004. Opinion by Battaglia, J.

**The state had territorial jurisdiction to prosecute the petitioner for detaining a child outside the state of Maryland because the intentional deprivation of lawful custody, an essential element of the offenses charged, occurred in Maryland.** The petitioner, traveled to the U.S. from Egypt to visit her daughter; she later left the U.S. with her daughter and two grandsons, in contravention of a Maryland order giving the children's father custody of one of the two boys. The petitioner was later arrested on a return visit to the U.S., convicted and sentenced. She served a portion of her sentence before being deported to Egypt. The case was

# Recent Family Law Decisions, cont. from p. 9

not barred as *ex post facto* even though penalties for the underlying statute, Family Law Article §9-305, were increased after petitioner left the U.S. with the boys, as she was convicted of crimes that continued beyond the effective date of the amended statute.

## ■ Marital Property

*Solomon v. Solomon*, No. 116, September Term 2003, filed Sept. 13, 2004. Opinion by Harrell, J.

Tax consequences may be considered in establishing the amount of a marital property award as an “other factor,” under Family Law Article §8-205(b)(11), when they are immediate and specific, or not speculative. The lower court, however, did not err in failing to consider the tax consequences the husband would have in prematurely liquidating his retirement assets to pay the monetary award because the court felt he had other assets he could draw upon to pay the award.

A non-equity, non-transferable country club membership is not property under the Marital Property Act and therefore does not constitute marital property because it cannot be converted into a monetary amount for equitable distribution. The Court of Appeals also found that the indefinite alimony awarded by the trial court was insufficient to redress unconscionable disparities in the parties’ income and should have been higher.

## ■ Paternity

*Evans v. Wilson*, No. 123, September Term 2003, filed Aug. 24, 2004. Opinion by Battaglia, J. Raker, J., dissents.

The trial court was correct in applying the best interest standard to deny the putative father’s request for a paternity test of a child born to the mother while she was married to another man. Statutory changes to Family Law Article, §5-1002(c) apply to children born *out of wedlock*, not, as here, children born during a marriage.

Although paternity actions may be pursued under the Estates and Trusts Article (§1-208), or the Family Law

Article (§5-1002(b)), when a child is born during a marriage, the court has previously ruled that an equitable action under the Estates and Trusts Article was the best way of establishing paternity, and that a motion to establish paternity under that article is discretionary. *Turner v. Whisted*, 327 Md. 106, 113, 607 A2d 935, 938 (1992). In applying its discretion, the court in *Turner* established that the court may consider the “best interests of the child.” In this case, although the mother had led both men to believe that each was the father of the child, the putative father had not seen the 2-year-old child since she was six weeks old. The child’s father of record, the mother’s husband, is the only man the child has known as a father. The child calls him “Daddy” and he participates in many of the routine tasks involved in parenting.

There is no constitutionally protected liberty interest of an alleged biological father in developing a relationship with a child who was born while the mother was married to another man.

## COURT OF SPECIAL APPEALS

### ■ Alimony

*Dave v. Steinmuller*, No. 1212, September Term 2003, filed July 15, 2004. Opinion by Sharer, J.

The trial court did not abuse its discretion when it determined that a Legg Mason securities account was not marital property where the account included funds inherited by the wife prior to the marriage, and where the account was directly traceable to an account established prior to the marriage, even though the husband assumed responsibility for managing the wife’s portfolio and testified he spent an average of 30 hours per week doing so. Competing financial experts provided conflicting testimony as to whether any of the account’s increase was due to the husband’s efforts. The trial court was correct in concluding that only by engaging in speculation could the court assign any of the increase to the husband’s efforts.

The Court of Special Appeals also declined to reverse the trial court’s findings that the husband was  
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not entitled to indefinite alimony as the husband had an engineering degree and the equivalent of an MBA.

*Francz v. Francz*, No. 1422, September Term 2003, filed July 15, 2004. Opinion by Eyler, Deborah S., J.

The court erroneously misinterpreted an earlier ruling in the case, concluding that the original trial court had already decided “whether” to grant indefinite alimony. In fact the original trial court had properly granted rehabilitative alimony and reserved on the issue of indefinite alimony.

Case vacated and remanded to permit the court to rule on the wife’s petition to now revisit the question of indefinite alimony and to determine whether indefinite alimony is warranted, and if so, how much. On remand the court may make its decision based on the earlier hearing, or may receive additional evidence if necessary.

Petitioner wife must show that even if she undertook reasonable steps towards becoming self-supporting, there would still be an unconscionable disparity between her income and that of her husband. The court should consider what the petitioner wife’s income would have been if she had made the reasonable efforts at rehabilitation the original trial court expected her to make when it awarded fixed-term rehabilitative alimony.

## ■ Alternative Dispute Resolution

*Mandl v. Bailey*, No. 1055, September Term, 2003, filed Sept. 30, 2004. Opinion by Eyler, Deborah S., J.

An arbitrator was not in error in declining to hear additional evidence as to whether the husband had experienced a material change in circumstances warranting a reduction in modifiable alimony pursuant to a separation agreement. The arbitrator had resolved all factual issues, issued an award reducing the alimony, calculated an arrearage and set fees. The order remained open for 15 days to permit the parties to notify him of any miscalculations needing to be resolved. During that period the husband argued the award be modified to calculate arrears from a different date. While that issue was pending, the wife learned the husband had been appointed to a lucrative position, which he knew was pending during earlier hearings. The arbitrator declined to take testimony as he interpreted the arbitration rules as prohibiting him from doing so.

## Child Abuse and Neglect

*Prince George’s Co. Dept. of Social Services v. Knight*, No. 1725, September Term, 2003, filed July 20, 2004. Opinion by Bloom, J. Concurring Opinion by Sonner, J.

A parent filed a timely notice of appeal with the Office of Administrative Hearings seeking a review of a finding of child abuse where the parent completed the front portion of a hearing request form within the 60 days required, but neglected to complete the back portion of the form or return the notice form. The parent completed the filing correctly on May 6; an ALJ dismissed the appeal stating that the notice was not perfected as it had not been filed by May 3, 60 days after the date of the notice sent to the parent. The Court of Special Appeals ruled that Family Law Article §5-701 permits a parent to request a contested case hearing within 60 days of when the notice is received.

## ■ Child Support

*Harvey v. Marshall*, No. 532, September Term, 2003, filed Sept. 7, 2004. Opinion by Adkins, J.

A court may not retroactively modify a child support award prior to the date of the filing of the motion of modification. Here the court affirmed a lower court ruling in which the lower court declined to set aside a father’s arrearage, even though that arrearage was owed to the state, and the father now had custody of his children. The court rejected the father’s argument that it was not in his children’s best interest for him to make payments to satisfy the arrears, as they were now in his care.

## ■ CINA

*In re: Ashley E., Laione D., Matthew B., and Gregory B-G*, No. 1907, September Term 2003, filed July 20, 2004. Opinion by Eyler, Deborah S., J.

While permanency plan oversight and review is integral to the CINA statutory scheme, it is not an adjudicatory function. The trial court had discretion as to whether or not to apply the Rules of Evidence in a permanency planning hearing and was thus not required to order the sequestration of witnesses upon appellant’s request. The court was correct in finding that a permanency planning hearing is dispositional in nature and that therefore the application of the

cont. on p. 14

# Committee on Family Law Update

At the Committee on Family Law's first meeting of the fiscal year on October 24, 2005, the committee reviewed subcommittee membership and made several changes. The committee also reviewed proposed changes to several of the domestic relations forms and discussed the following:

## Family Court ADR Program Best Practices

A group of judges continues to meet to review this document. The group will conclude its work by conference call and report to the full committee at the December meeting.

## Best Practices for Programs to Assist Self-Represented Litigants

A group of judges met over the summer to make revisions to the document. Final recommendations will be made to the full committee at the December meeting.

## Proposed Changes to Maryland Rules 9-205

The committee considered changes to Maryland Rule 9-205, suggested in part by members of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence. Pamela Ortiz, executive director of the Department of Family Administration, has been meeting with network members since the spring to discuss concerns domestic violence advocates have had regarding the use of mediation in cases where there has been a history of domestic violence. They asked the committee to consider endorsing changes to Rule 9-205 that would strengthen the exception to the rule requiring mediation in child access cases. While no consensus emerged, the discussion of the rule will continue at the December meeting.

FY 2005

## Committee on Family Law

Hon. Nancy Davis-Loomis, Chair  
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Hon. Angela Eaves  
Hon. Deborah Eyler  
Hon. Marcella Holland  
Hon. Sherrie Krauser  
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Hon. Cathy Hollenberg Serrette  
Hon. James L. Sherbin  
Hon. Julia Weatherly  
Master Erica Wolfe  
Pamela Cardullo Ortiz, Staff

# A New Face in Family Administration: Lynette Smothers

The Department of Family Administration extends a warm welcome to Lynette Smothers who has joined the Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP) as its new administrative assistant. Ms. Smothers came on board in September, bringing with her an array of talents and experience.

Prior to coming to the Administrative Office of the Courts, Lynette worked for the University of Maryland School of Medicine in the Department of Endocrinology. Lynette has also had the opportunity to serve in our nation's capital on "The Hill" for more than seven years. She has worked for several U.S. representatives, a U.S. senator, and in Maryland's former Gov. Parris Glendening's Washington office. These varied experiences have given her the opportunity to help people in different ways, she says. In her spare time, Lynette is active in her church and teaches Sunday School to children between 5 and 8 years old. She also

enjoys taking long walks for relaxation and exercise. Lynette is married and is the mother of two sons of whom she is very proud.

Lynette's primary goal for the future is to return to school and expand her degree. Her more immediate goal, however, is to learn all she can about the Administrative Office of the Courts, so that she can be more efficient and creative in her new role as administrative assistant. The Foster Care Court Improvement Project staff is extremely pleased that Lynette has joined the team and looks forward to many years together. Welcome to the family, Lynette!!



## A Model for Maryland?

# Model Courts Improve Child Welfare Outcomes

During this year's 7<sup>th</sup> *Annual Child Abuse Neglect and Delinquency Options Conference*, participants learned about a nation-wide initiative that may hold promise for Maryland. Judge Stephen Rideout of Alexandria, Virginia conducted an informational session on the *Child Victims Act Model Courts Project*, a national project where participating courts are commonly referred to as "Model Courts."

The Model Court Project is a national network of child abuse and neglect courts committed to shaping their court systems in a manner that improves the outcomes for abused and neglected children and their families. "Model Court" is somewhat of a 'misnomer' initially for courts that participate in the project, because many jurisdictions participating in the Model Court project are plagued by the same challenges that hinder the child welfare systems' ability to resolve child abuse and neglect issues smoothly. Even so, Model Court jurisdictions with steadfast resolve, are all committed to alleviating the challenges in their child welfare system.

Beginning in the early 1990's the Model Court concept evolved out of a collaboration between the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Together they sought ways to better respond to the needs of child victims. Model Court projects were created to provide an environment for children, and their families, where permanency could become a reality in the most timely manner.

Model Courts utilize the principles of the NCJFCJ's *Resource Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases* to create "systems of change" in their court rooms. Model Courts operate in a team framework, where a "Lead Judge" heads a multi-disciplinary team generally comprised of attorneys, child advocates, child welfare officials, educators and other interested child welfare stakeholders. The team works with the NCJFCJ to examine and initiate ways to improve the child welfare process in their jurisdictions. In its efforts, Model Courts focus on the court process and

how that process impacts the state's ability to meet local and federal child welfare requirements, the day-to-day child welfare practice, and how the court can assist to improve the overall handling of child abuse and neglect cases. There are currently 25 Model Courts across the country, ranging from large urban cities to smaller cities; all are committed to being "laboratories for systems change."

The following are only a few of the successful initiatives that have come out of the Model Courts Project:

### ■ Shortening the time frame of children under court supervision.

In Tucson, Arizona, the juvenile court achieved a 50% reduction in the length of time a child remained under the court's jurisdiction, from an average stay of 400 to 178 days.

### ■ Putting the focus on permanency for children in safe and stable families and decreasing the number of cases under court supervision.

The New York City Family Court was able to reduce the number of children in foster care from 49,000 to 25,000; Chicago's Juvenile Court in a three-year period reduced its backlog of children in out-of-home, long-term foster care from an estimated 58,000 to fewer than 20,000.

### ■ Increasing the number of adoptions and foster care placements.

The number of adoption cases in San Jose has doubled during its involvement in the project.

Model Courts are pioneers of many initiatives that are being duplicated and are helpful to juvenile courts across the country. If you are interested in additional information about the Child Victims Act Model Courts Project or to receive a copy of *Resource Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*, contact the Foster Care Court Improvement Project at (410) 260-1427 or visit the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges' website at [www.ncjfcj.org](http://www.ncjfcj.org).

# Recent Family Law Decisions, cont. from p. 11

Rules of Evidence are discretionary with the court. In a disposition hearing in a CINA case, the juvenile court has discretion not to strictly apply the Rules of Evidence. *CJP §11-115*. This is not the case for an adjudicatory proceeding where the Rules of Evidence “shall apply.” *CJP §3-817(b)*

While the trial court may have failed to exclude members of the public from the proceeding as required in *CJP §3-810(b)*, the appellant failed to show she was prejudiced by the court’s inaction.

Finally, the trial court did not err in changing the children’s permanency plan from reunification to adoption where there was competent and material evidence that the department made efforts that the appellant could have taken advantage of to effect a reunification. Judgment affirmed.

## ■ Civil Contempt

*Young v. Fauth*, No. 0448, September Term, 2003, filed July 19, 2004. Opinion by Smith.

The trial court erred when it issued a writ of body attachment with a full cash appearance bond of \$15,000 in a child support enforcement case where the respondent was \$33,174 in arrears and had failed to appear for a hearing on a petition to find the respondent in constructive civil contempt. The pre-hearing detention of the respondent subject to the writ and bond was improper. “[B]ecause a person’s liberty interest is at stake [in a civil contempt proceeding] and because it is a judicial proceeding, both the form and substance of due process and proper judicial procedure must be observed.” *Wilson v. Holliday*, 364 Md. 589, 610-11, 744 a.2d 1123, 1135 (2001).

The court has also previously determined that the use of a body attachment with a high cash bond to incarcerate an alleged contemnor pending a hearing was a “*de facto* contempt finding, complete with a sanction of incarceration and a purge provision, but without the procedural safeguards provided by the common law . . . or contained in Rule 15-207.”

*Redden v. Dept. of Social Services*, 139 Md. App. 66, 74-75, 773-A2d 1094,

1099 (2001). The court should have either directed that the contemnor be arrested and brought before the court for a hearing, or held the hearing in the contemnor’s absence.

It was also improper for the trial court to incarcerate the contemnor after the hearing with a purge provision requiring the contemnor to sell his Coca Cola memorabilia collection and turn the proceeds over to the Bureau of Support Enforcement. At the time he was incarcerated, the contemnor did not have the present ability to pay the purge amount; his ability to pay was contingent upon his selling the collection. The case was dismissed on grounds of mootness as the contemnor had since met the purge and been released.

## ■ Delinquency

*In re: Anthony W.*, No. 2341, September Term, 2002, filed Oct. 14, 2004. Opinion by Getty, J. Dissent by Murphy, C.J.

The accomplice-corroboration rule which requires the state to corroborate accomplice testimony with independent evidence applies in delinquency proceedings. Here the state’s case consisted entirely of the statements of two accomplices, without any additional independent evidence. Judgment reversed. Here, two youth testified that the respondent vandalized a school bus. They claimed that they themselves had only removed a box of flares from the bus.

*Dissent.* In his dissent, Chief Judge Murphy agreed that the rule should apply in delinquency cases, but felt that as in criminal cases, the defendant who claims the benefit of the rule should have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the witnesses were in fact accomplices. Here, he stated, the witnesses are not accomplices to the appellant’s delinquent act of malicious destruction of property.

# The Maryland Judiciary Welcomes Three New Masters

## Master Paul D. Wright, III

Master Wright was sworn in June 2 as a Juvenile Master in Prince George's County where he predominantly hears Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) cases. A native of Ohio, Master Wright moved to Maryland when he was 15 years old. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law and did his undergraduate work at the University of Maryland.

The seeds of Master Wright's judicial career were planted early. Master Wright was a judicial law clerk for the Hon. Ernest Loveless, Jr., who retired from the Prince George's County Circuit Court in the early 1980s. Master Wright then joined the Prince George's firm of West & West. Prior to his appointment, Master Wright was a general practitioner for 31 years where he handled family law, probate, bankruptcy, and criminal motor vehicle cases. Master Wright says the best part of being a master is "helping people resolve the matter that brought them to court, especially when it impacts on children, and working with a variety of legal issues in family and juvenile law." When he is not on the bench, Master Wright enjoys playing golf, tennis, and spending time with his wife of 24 years and their four children.

## Master Maurice Nelson

Master Nelson was appointed to the bench in Dorchester County after serving part-time as the Deputy State's Attorney for Dorchester and Caroline Counties. Master Nelson is a graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law and did graduate and undergraduate studies at the University of Delaware and Loyola College, earning a master's degree along the way. Master Nelson's professional background began as an administrator in the Agricultural and Natural Resources Division of the University of Maryland. From 1991 to 2004, he litigated domestic cases and represented government clients. Master Nelson has two children, ages 12 and 14, and enjoys living on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

## Master Thomas J. Rogers, Jr.

Master Rogers was sworn in Sept. 1 and currently sits in the Circuit Court for Prince George's County. In addition to hearing Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) cases, Master Roger's docket also includes juvenile arraignments and detentions, as well as domestic relations cases. Prior to taking the bench, Master Rogers was in private practice in Prince George's County for more than 10 years where he focused on family law cases. He also worked as a mediator privately and for the courts. In his practice,

Master Rogers brought with him the experience he gained from working in a firm with a concentration in family, civil, and criminal law. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law and did his undergraduate work at the University of Maryland in College Park. Upon passing the bar examination, Master Rogers clerked for Prince George's County Circuit Court Judge David Ross. Master Rogers lives in Montgomery County where he treasures his "favorite thing in the world" which is spending time with his wife of 15 years, their 10-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son.



# Around Maryland

## Anne Arundel

The Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County launched its new Child in Need of Assistance (CINA)/Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Mediation Program in November. The program was funded by a grant from the Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP) and the Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO). Mediators have been trained and a stakeholder training was also held in November.

## Frederick

Frederick County Circuit Court offered an orientation for children's attorneys in October. The program was conducted by Frederick County Circuit Court Judge G. Edward Dwyer and Keith Schiszik, a local family law attorney with 20 years experience representing children.

The orientation provided information on roles and responsibilities, pertinent case law, expectations of the bench, and tips on collaborating with mental health professionals and other service providers. The court added nine attorneys, expanding their pool of qualified lawyers to 46.

## Kent

Kent County Family Support Services, in collaboration with For All Seasons, Inc., has been granted an expansion site for a Family Supervised Visitation Program at the Kent Family Center in Chestertown. The site is scheduled to be open every other Friday evening for two hours and the following Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m.

## St. Mary's

St. Mary's County Juvenile Drug Court was awarded a federal grant for its Juvenile Drug Court. \$223,896 was awarded to cover implementation costs for three years. The court will use the funds to hire a juvenile drug court coordinator. St. Mary's currently has 12 youth in the program and recently celebrated its first drug court graduation.

## Somerset

Somerset County's newly established Child Advocacy Center opened Dec. 1 at its new location in Princess Anne. An opening ceremony will take place in January. The local management board for the Department of Social Services, local law enforcement, State's Attorney's Office, and Family Services have worked to provide a neutral space for joint investigations.

"All About Children" classes have begun at the Lower Shore Family Center which is supported by Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset counties. The classes serve as another resource for the courts and referring agencies when families are accessing the supervised visitation/monitored exchange program in Salisbury.

The new Facilitators Program will begin in Master's Court this month for those litigants who can immediately resolve some of their domestic issues and place the agreement on the record that day. The program will not only address emotional issues but maintain case flow assessment figures.

## Talbot

Along with Caroline and Queen Anne's Counties, Talbot County Circuit Court is revising its Parent Education Program. The decision to make changes was reached after reviewing the exit survey and speaking to participants. A draft of the new curriculum and manual better addresses the needs of divorcing and separating parents. The new material will include more emphasis on mediation and the absolute need for cooperation and communication.





# Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP) Update

The Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP) is working on the reassessment of the juvenile courts's processing of CINA and related cases that is due to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) June 30, 2005.

The reassessment process includes a judicial and legal workload assessment, case file reviews, court observations, identifying all Maryland laws relating to Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) and related cases that are designed to achieve safe, timely, and permanent placements for children who are removed from their homes due to abuse and/or neglect. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the University of Maryland School of Social Work are working with the FCCIP to complete the reassessment.

FCCIP staff have also coordinated six regional training meetings that focus on the two federal reviews, Title IV-E and the Child and Family Services Review, and court practices that affect the outcomes of those reviews, ultimately affecting the welfare of the children. Four of the training meetings have been held, and the final two sessions are scheduled for the last two Fridays in January.

## CINA Subcommittee

The CINA Subcommittee has completed drafting the proposed TPR/Adoption legislation. This legislation will be introduced as part of the judiciary's legislative packet. A copy of the proposed legislation can be found on the judiciary Web site at [www.courts.state.md.us/family/fccip/cinacom.html](http://www.courts.state.md.us/family/fccip/cinacom.html). For more information, please contact Althea R. Stewart Jones, Esq., FCCIP Director, at 410/260-1296.

## Representation Subcommittee

The Representation Subcommittee coordinated its second annual training day for attorneys representing

parties in CINA and related cases. The attorneys' conference was held Oct. 5 at the Sheraton Columbia Hotel and Conference Center in Columbia. See page 4 for a full report.

## Statistics Oversight Subcommittee

The Statistics Oversight Subcommittee sponsored another series of training programs this past fall. Juvenile clerks and other court staff participated in the joint training presented by staff from the Judicial Information Systems (JIS) and the FCCIP.

The Statistics Oversight Subcommittee continues to focus on generating reliable statistics in CINA and related cases, Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) cases, and adoption cases. External vendors are also helping the FCCIP with this project.

## Training Subcommittee

Judges and masters throughout the state met for the three-day Child Abuse, Neglect, and Delinquency (C.A.N.D.O.) Conference in St. Michael's. For a full report, refer to the article on page 3. For more information or questions regarding the conference, please contact Tracy Watkins-Tribbitt, Assistant Director of the FCCIP at 410/260-1272.

## TPR/ Permanency Planning Subcommittee

After much discussion, the TPR/Permanency Planning Subcommittee was dissolved. All tasks assigned to the TPR/Permanency Planning Subcommittee have been reassigned to other FCCIP subcommittees or have evolved to a point where future priorities will be coordinated through combined efforts of the Permanency Planning Liaisons, FCCIP staff, and the Implementation Committee. The FCCIP greatly appreciates the hard work and efforts of the members of this subcommittee.



# Don't Just Paint It Pink!

A creative team of dedicated professionals in Baltimore City is helping courts and agencies rethink their approach to working with girls involved with the juvenile justice system. The group, led by Baltimore City Circuit Court Judge Audrey Carrion, has formed a Baltimore City Task Force on the Needs of Girls. The group accomplished one of its major goals by holding a conference Nov. 17 to draw attention to the unique needs of girls involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice arena.

More than 100 attendees from various city and state agencies came together in Timonium at the Loyola College Graduate Center to participate in the conference titled, "Don't Just Paint It Pink: Responding to the Needs of Girls in Baltimore City." A primary goal of the conference was to train the trainers – to use the conference not only to raise awareness of girls' issues but to encourage the development of gender responsive training curricula within the various entities.

Dr. Meda Chesney Lind of the University of Hawaii at Manoa presented the keynote address. In summarizing her own research on girls in the juvenile justice system and that of others, she noted that while the media has made much of recent increases in "girl violence," that increase is overwhelmingly the result of increases in simple assaults. Girls are being arrested for what she termed "relational assaults"—simple assaults without a weapon, usually inflicted on family members or close acquaintances. In Dr. Lind's opinion, some of the increased focus on female youth violence is the result of an increase in "upcriming" of minor violence by girls.

Dr. Lind also pointed to a lack of appropriate alternatives to detention and treatment resources; noting that issues that need to be addressed for young women are more complex than those for boys. Effective programming for girls should focus on emotional stress, physical and sexual abuse, negative body image, disordered eating, suicide, pregnancy, and depres-

sion.

Dr. Lind noted that depression is often a pathway to aggression. To reduce aggression, courts and service providers must find a way to effectively identify and address depression.

Dr. Lind's conclusions were reenforced by researcher Dr. Barbara Guthrie of the University of Michigan who presented a workshop entitled "Her Story: What Do We Need to Know About Girls and the Juvenile Justice System." Dr. Guthrie summarized research she had conducted in Florida and Maryland suggesting that in Maryland, African

American females often become involved with the juvenile justice system for less violent, less serious behaviors.

While Dr. Guthrie was cautious in the conclusions she drew from the data, conference participants noted a connection between the "upcriming" highlighted by Dr. Lind and the disproportionate representation of African American youth in the juvenile justice system.

Additional workshops focused on the mental health needs of girls and ways to improve coordination and integration of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Attendees of the conference included the Baltimore City Circuit Court juvenile judges and masters, as well as representatives from the Department of Juvenile Services, the Department of Social Services, the Governor's Office of Children, Youth, and Families, and the Judicial Institute.

At the conclusion of the conference, participants spent time brainstorming about how they might bring these insights home to their own agencies or organizations to ensure that Maryland justice system partners work together to respond effectively to the needs of girls.

The conference was funded in part by a special project grant from the Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Family Administration.

"For years, people assumed that all you have to do to make a program designed for boys work for girls is to paint the walls pink and take out the urinals."

— Marion Daniels,  
Founder, Female Intervention  
Team Program, Maryland

# New Final, Temporary and Interim Protective Orders

As a result of a new law (HB1148, Chapter 537) which created criminal penalties for failure to surrender firearms to law enforcement for the duration of a protective order, as well as other requests for improvement, changes were made to the final protective order (CC-DC/DV3), the temporary protective order (CC-DC/DV2), and the interim protective order (DC/DV14). Highlights to the new language in the final protective order include:

- Additional language that provides for a respondent's consent to the entry of a protective order without a finding of abuse;
- Additional language providing an exception to no contact with the person eligible for relief for contact to facilitate child visitation;
- Reorganization of the custody provisions;
- Reorganization and rewording of the visitation provisions;
- Change in wording for issuance of an earnings withholding order; and
- Additional language added in the notice to respondent to clarify penalties and Maryland and federal law.

Questions can be directed to the Department of Family Administration at 410/260-1580.

## COMING TO A COURT NEAR YOU!

# Child Support Brochures

The Child Support Incentive Funds Committee has developed a series of six brochures/cards that explain various portions of the child support process. With the approval of the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks, child support incentive funds were used to develop brochures on the following topics:

- Establishing child support
- Frequently asked questions about child support
- Contempt and enforcement of child support
- Maryland child support guidelines
- Modification of child support
- The Maryland Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA)

The first three listed are full brochures while the last three are double-sided cards. The committee has ordered 100,000 of each and expects delivery around Dec. 1. After delivery, the committee will disseminate the brochures and cards to each Clerk's Office and to Family Support Services coordinators. Look for them by the first of the new year!

### Establishing Child Support

### How Can I Begin to Receive Child Support?



## Department of Family Administration

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